



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

TREE POLICY & STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY REVIEW – SCOPE

Draft Version 3

1. Topic - Tree Policy & Strategy

2. Responsible Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

3. Purpose of the scrutiny review

The purpose of this Scrutiny review is to:

To achieve a harmonised Tree Policy and Strategy which includes initiatives which support the goals of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Key lines of enquiry

- To identify public perspectives and priorities on tree management in West Northamptonshire, identifying issues which are important in different areas
- To examine the Council's current tree maintenance policy/practices to ensure they are robust, including the choice of tree species and the set criteria for the planting, removal and works to trees
- To review the arrangements for tree maintenance and potential tree planting programmes and the level of tree planting within West Northamptonshire
- To examine how the draft Tree Policy & Strategy can be utilised to enhance the emerging West Northants Strategic Plan and other policy documents of the Council and its delivery agents
- To identify the number of trees planted and removed each year and the reasons for this; and to understand the impact of this on the Council's organisational goals
- To examine tree planting within new developments, focussing on how planning commitments can be enforced.
- To consider whether available funding for tree maintenance and management is being used in the most effective and efficient ways

- To examine how the Tree Policy and Strategy can support good infrastructure design and avoid conflict.
- To explore if and how the CAVAT tool should be implemented in West Northamptonshire.
- To explore how there can best be cohesive working between all stakeholders, the voluntary sector, managed agencies and service areas regarding the responsibilities in relation to trees

4. Outcomes

To make evidenced based recommendations to inform the Council's Tree Policy & Strategy

5. Approach

The scrutiny review will be carried out by a Task and Finish Group made up of the following councillors:

1. Councillor Pinder Chauhan (Chair)
2. Councillor Jo Gilford
3. Councillor Janice Duffy
4. Councillor Louisa Fowler
5. Councillor Emma Roberts
6. Councillor Penny Flavell
7. Councillor Brian Sargeant

Co-optees: None for this Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish Group will make use of the standard working methods applicable to scrutiny reviews, including evidence-gathering meetings (either in-person or virtual); desktop research; targeted evidence-gathering by individual members; and site visits, as appropriate.

6. Information required

Background data

- Scene-setting presentation – To identify any issues with trees and tree maintenance
Information regarding trees helping to alleviate flooding when planted in the right place.
- Carried motion – full Council July 2021:

“Council agrees that planting trees has a significant benefit to health, well-being, the environment and to helping tackle climate change. This Council agrees to fully embrace “The Queen’s Green Canopy Scheme” launched to mark Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

Council agrees to develop an action plan to work with Schools, Colleges and Community Groups alongside the Woodland Trust to co-ordinate a campaign across West Northamptonshire to apply for the free saplings available as part of the Scheme and to encourage tree planting between Oct 2021 to the end of 2022.”

Proposed by Cllr Hallam, seconded by Cllr Morgan.”

- Relevant local policies and strategies
- Relevant national and local research, such as Woodland Trust “Local Authority Tree Strategies”
- Draft Tree Policy for West Northamptonshire
- Examples of good practice from West Northamptonshire and other comparable areas
- Various site visits as determined by the Task and Finish Group; to include a visit to another local authority noted for its best practice for the implementation of a Tree Policy, such as Birmingham City Council or Bristol City Council.

Views from internal expert advisors

- Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste
- Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs
- Executive Director of Place, Economy & Environment
- Assistant Director Assets & Environment
- Assistant Director Highways & Waste
- Assistant Director Growth, Climate & Regeneration
- Environmental Services Contract Manager
- Tree Maintenance Officers
- [If required] NPH service lead for tree issues

Views from external expert advisors

- Community Groups, such as Save our Trees, Garden Organic
- Conservation Groups such as the Woodland Trust
- Environment Agency
- Construction developers

- Grand Union Housing, Futures Homes and other relevant registered providers of affordable housing
- Parish and town councils
- Local residents, via a survey
- Residents' associations
- Schools and colleges

7. Resources and support

- Simon Bowers, Assistant Director Assets & Environment
- Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager for evidence-gathering and for production of the scrutiny review report

8. Timetable and key dates

| | Date |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Inaugural Task and Finish Group meeting | 13 October 2021 (remote over Zoom) |
| Confirmation of the scope of the review by the Place OSC | 1 November 2021 |
| Evidence-gathering (specific dates for meetings and other activity to be set by the Task and Finish Group) | November to February 2022 |
| Approval of draft report by the Task and Finish Group Agreement of draft report by the Place OSC | April 2022 |
| Chair of the Place OSC to present the final report to WNC Cabinet | |

9. Follow-up/Monitoring

The Place OSC will review the impact of the scrutiny review 6 months after the presentation of the final report to decision-makers.

NB: Each OSC will have a monitoring Work Programme to monitor the impact of the accepted recommendations